

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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DEPARTMENT FOR M, A, AND NEA;

AID FOR NEASA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, AF

SUBJ: GAO VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN

1. SUMMARY: GAO TEAM HAS COMPLETED TEN-DAY REVIEW OF U.S. MISSION IN KABUL. TEAM RAISED BASIC QUESTIONS ON SIZE OF U.S. PRESENCE, GOA AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND AFGHAN ARMS ACQUISITION.

2. GOA TEAM OF MESSRS. DEMARCO, KLAPP, AND CARPENTER HAS COMPLETED A TEN-DAY "COUNTRY SURVEILLANCE" OF AFGHANISTAN ON DECEMBER 20. TEAM TOLD EMBASSY THEY WERE PLEASED WITH COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE THEY HAD RECEIVED DURING THEIR STAY FROM ALL U.S. MISSION ELEMENTS. ONLY SNAG IN SUPPORT CAME ON LAST DAY OF TOUR WHEN IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT AFGHAN EXIT VISAS WERE NOT PROPERLY PROCESSED AND TEAM'S DEPARTURE DELAYED 24 HOURS.

3. UNDER GROUND RULES OF A NEW PROCEDURE WHICH GAO TEAM CALLED A "COUNTRY SURVEILLANCE" THIS VISIT WAS NOT AN INSPECTION BUT MORE OF A REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES OF IDENTIFY
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POSSIBLE PROBLEM AREAS.

4. IN WIND-UP INTERVIEW, TEAM INDICATED THEY SAW THREE MAIN AREAS OF POSSIBLE FURTHER GOA STUDY. ON BASIS OF REVIEW, WHICH INCLUDED STUDY OF U.S. PROGRAM IN AFGHANISTAN PRIOR TO THIS TEN-DAY VISIT, TEAM FIRST AND FOREMOST RAISED QUESTION OF WHETHER IT IS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN PRESENT LEVEL U.S. INVOLVEMENT (RESOURCE EXPENDITURE) IN AFGHANISTAN. TEAM HAD TALKED TO MEMBERS OF ON-GOING POLICY REVIEW GROUP AND SEEMED ORIGINALLY TO HAVE OBTAINED IMPRESSION THAT THERE WAS DIVISION IN EMBASSY OVER BASIC GOALS OF U.S. POLICY.

GOA TEAM WAS BRIEFED ON U.S. OBJECTIVES AND ADVISED THAT THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THROUGHOUT FOREIGN AFFAIRS AGENCIES THAT THE PRESENT LEVEL OF U.S. OBJECTIVES AND ADVISED THAT THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THROUGHOUT FOREIGN AFFAIRS AGENCIES THAT THE PRESENT LEVEL OF U.S. EXPENDITURE WAS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN MAINTAINING THE VIABILITY OF AFGHANISTAN AND AN INDEPENDENT, NON-ALIGNED COUNTRY. TEAM WAS REFERRED AGAIN TO KABUL 1090 (FEBURARY 1974), A COUNTRY TEAM DOCUMENT WHICH ENUNCIATED AGREED GOALS FOR AFGHANISTAN. WE AGREED IT NOT EASY TO PINPOINT A MAGIC DOLLAR FIGURE WHICH WAS "RIGHT" LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT TO ACHIEVE U.S. OBJECTIVES BUT POINTED OUT THAT AID AND CONDUCTED SEARCHING REVIEW OF ITS ACTIVITIES OVER PAST 18 MONTHS, HAD REDIRECTED ITS PROGRAM ALONG LINES OF CONGRESSIONAL MANDATE AND WAS CONTINUING ITS REVIEW TO BE SURE U.S. RESOURCES WERE PROPERLY AND APPROPRIATELY USED. PARENTHETICALLY, WE SHOULD POINT OUT THAT GOA TEAM PRAISED AID/AFGHANISTAN FOR THIS REDIRECTION EFFORT. WE TOLD TEAM WE DID NOT AGREE THAT MORE MULTI-LATERAL AID WAS AN ALTERNATIVE TO BILATERAL AID, AS LAST GOA TEAM HAD SUGGESTED.

WE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT POLICY REVIEW PROCESS, SOME OF WHOSE FRANK DISCUSSION TEAM HAD HEARD, WAS PART OF A DEBATE STIMULATED BY AMBASSADOR WITH NEA AND DEPARTMENT BACKING TO ENSURE REGULAR, INCISIVE EXAMINATION OF U.S. GOALS AND LEVEL OF U.S. PRESENCE.

IN CONNECTION U.S. MISSION BASIC NEED FOR RESOURCES IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEFENSE AMERICAN INTERESTS, WE UNDERLINED FOR GOA TEAM EMPHASIS U.S. MISSION IS PLACING ON DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE DRUG CONTROL PROGRAM AND REFERRED THEM TO KABUL 6946 FOR SUMMARY OF SITUATION AND OUR APPROACH AT PRESENT. TEAM SEEMED TO AGREE WITH US THAT POLICY OF WORKING WITH UNFDAC WAS PROMISING AND USEFUL.

5. AS A SECOND MAIN AREA, MR. DEMARCO WAS INTERESTED IN

POSSIBLE ACTION OF GOA IN CONTRAVENTION TO FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT, ESPECIALLY VIOLATIONS OF SECTION 620(S) (CONCERN OF THE CONGRESS THAT RESOURCES INTENDED FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NOT BE DIVERTED FOR MILITARY PURPOSES).

WE POINTED OUT THAT PERCENTAGE OF GOA BUDGET DEVOTED TO MILITARY PURPOSES HAS BEEN DECLINING AND IS NOT BELOW 20 PERCENT, THAT WEAPONS IN AFGHANISTAN ARE LARGELY SECOND-HAND RUSSIAN EQUIPMENT FROM 50'S AND 60'S (E.G. MIG 17), AND THAT THE PERCENTAGE OF GNP DEVOTED TO MILITARY SPENDING IS BELOW TWO PERCENT.

6. AS A THIRD MAJOR AREA OF STUDY, GOA TEAM ALSO SAID THEY WISHED TO EXAMINE AGRICULTURAL "DISINCENTIVES." AS AN EXAMPLE OF A DISINCENTIVE, THEY SAID IT WOULD BE THE POLICY OF A COUNTRY NOT TO ENCOURAGE FARMING, BUT TO IMPORT PL-480 WHEAT. THE QUESTIONS RAISED IN THIS AREA ARE RATHER COMPLEX AND WILL BE ANSWERED IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE.

7. TEAM DID NOT MENTION ANY OTHER SPECIFIC PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED. THEY TOOK NOTE OF AMBASSADOR'S CONCERN OF LOW LEVEL OF FUNDING FOR USIS, AND WE MAY EXPECT FURTHER REVIEW OF OVERSEAS SCHOOL POLICIES (ESPECIALLY WHAT NON-U.S. CHILDREN ARE ALLOWED TO ATTEND) AND REFERRED TO A WORLD-WIDE REVIEW OF AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED TO U.S. MISSIONS.

8. IN COURSE OF A COUNTRY TEAM MEETING, MISSION OFFICERS HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS WAYS AND MEANS LEGISLATION WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO TAX SOME FOREIGN SERVICE ALLOWANCES. MAIN POINT OF INTEREST TO DEPARTMENT, IN WHAT BECAME A FAIRLY SPIRITED BUT GOOD-NATURED EXCHANGE, SEEMED TO BE THAT THIS GOA TEAM NOT FAMILAR WITH FACT THAT FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO SERVE WHERE THEY ARE SENT -- FREQUENTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN DIFFICULT AND UNHEALTHFUL CIRCUMSTANCES.

9. GOA TEAM'S VISIT WAS A STIMULATING CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONTINUING PROCESS OF EXAMINATION AND REEXAMINATION OF U.S. GOALS AND PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN.

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